

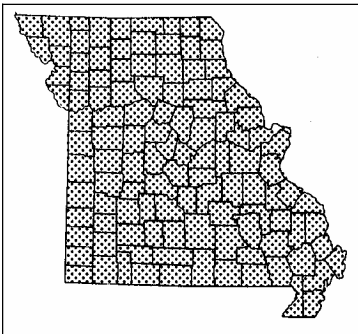
Sycamore

Platanus occidentalis L.

Sycamore is also called buttonwood, American planetree, buttonball tree, and American sycamore. It grows throughout Missouri on just about any site, but favors rich riverbottoms where it attains great size. It is the largest broadleaf tree in the U.S. and may be found mixed with river birch, elm, soft maple, boxelder, black willow and cottonwood, or in pure stands. It is often an invader of old fields.

The sapwood is light tan, creamy or pinkish white, while the heartwood is flesh to brownish pink, or reddish brown. The bark on young trees is thin, smooth and whitish, peeling off in large flakes. On older trees, the lower bark becomes deeply furrowed and broken into small, round scales. The dry wood has no particular odor, but when green, it may have a decidedly rank odor. The growth rings are distinct and the wood diffuse porous with a close-grained but coarse texture. Ray fleck is very apparent on the radial section. Because of the interlocked grain, it is difficult to split and may chip unless high speed tools are used to machine it. It is inclined to warp, and it may be bent easily after steaming. It is not durable when exposed to conditions favorable to decay. Quarter-sawn stock displays a small ray fleck which is very attractive.

Sycamore is one of our most important commercial trees. One of its principal uses is for drawer sides in chests. It is also used in butcher blocks, boxes and crates, paneling, furniture, pallets, slack cooperage and is sliced into veneer which is used for fruit and vegetable boxes. It has been used for gunstocks on inexpensive rifles. As a home workshop wood, sycamore is excellent if it is properly dried and kept that way. It is a tough, resilient wood.



Massengale

